

## Message Text

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53

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-07 L-03 EB-11 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 OMB-01

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R 280808 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0180

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DACCA 2903

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PGOV, BG

SUBJECT: CURRENT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

1. MIDWAY THROUGH ITS CURRENT BUDGET SESSION, THE JATIYO SANGSAD ( PARLIAMENT) AS EXPECTED HAS PASSED BY VOICE VOTE ALL BILLS PRESENTED SO FAR BY BDG. DEBATE HAS RANGED FROM EXTENDED SQUABBLES OVER CONSTITUTIONAL AND PROCEDURAL POINTS TO SOME FAIRLY SHARP QUESTIONING OF MINISTERS, AT TIMES AMOUNTING TO CONCERTED ATTACKS OVER SUCH POPULAR TOPICS AS THE SHORTAGE OF CLOTH. THE TINY BAND OF OPPOSITION MEMBERS -- WITHOUT ITS MOST EFFECTIVE SPEAKER, ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN, WHO IS HOSPITALIZED -- HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN DEPLORING CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY. THE DOCILE AWAMI LEAGUERS, HOWEVER, HAVE REVEALED A SENSITIVITY TO LOCAL ISSUES AND TO THE PEOPLE' S DISSATISFACTION WITH GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND INCREASINGLY VIOLENT CRIME. WHILE ALWAYS REAFFIRMING BELIEF IN GOVERNMENT AND THE PROGRESS OF SOCIALISM AND BLAMING THE BUREAUCRACY, MIDDLEMEN, THE RICH, PAKISTAN, AND THE ENEMIES OF BANGLADESH FOR THE ILLS OF THE COUNTRY, AWAMI

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LEAGUE MPS THROUGH THEIR QUESTIONS AT TIMES HAVE PUT MINISTERS ON THE DEFENSIVE. EACH MEETING HAS BROUGHT EXTENSIVE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS CONCERNING HIGH PRICES, LACK OF CLOTH, POOR AND OVERCROWDED TRAIN SERVICE, POWER FAILURES, MISMANAGED BAZAARS, FOOD PRODUCTION, DOCOITRY, SECRET MURDERS, THE CONDUCT OF BUREAUCRATS AND THE RAKKHI BAHINI, AND THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY.

2. SO FAR THE PARLIAMENT HAS PASSED SEVEN BILLS INCLUDING REMUNERATION OF MINISTERS, MANAGEMENT OF BAZAARS, REORGANIZATION OF THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY, STATUS OF PARTY WHIPS, CITIZENSHIP OF BENGALEES IN BRITAIN, AND THE RAILROAD BUDGET. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE BILLS WERE REFERRED TO COMMITTEE. BUDGET DISCUSSION CONTINUES. TWO PROPOSED BILLS NOT YET PRESENTED ARE THE AMENDMENT TO PRESIDENT'S ORDER NO. 50 CONCERNING GRAVE OFFENSES AND THE LEGISLATION ON THE WAR CRIMES TRIALS. THE BANGLADESH SUPREME COURT BAR ASSOCIATION HAS ALREADY EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE P. O. NO. 50 AMENDMENT AND IN A UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION URGED BDG NOT TO ENLARGE THE DEFINITION OF GRAVE OFFENSES SO AS TO CURTAIL LIBERTY, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

3. THIS PARLIAMENTARY SESSION HAS NOT HAD ANY APPARENT IMPACT UPON THE DIRECION OF BDG POLICIES AND PLANS, BUT IT HAS DEMONSTRATED AT THE LEAST THAT AWAMI LEAGUE MEMBERS ARE UNWILLING TO SILENTLY ENDORSE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS. THEY HAVE SHOWN A STRONG PENCHANT FOR ASKING DETAILED QUESTIONS WHICH, WHILE NOT MATERIALLY AFFECTING THE CONTENT OF ANY BILL, HAVE RESULTED IN BDG'S SUPPLYING INFORMATION THAT MIGHT NOT OTHERWISE HAVE BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE. GIVEN THE LACK OF ANY REAL OPPOSITION, THE JATIYO SANGSAD CAN BE DESCRIBED AS A RUBBER STAMP, BUT ONE WITH A BOUNCE TO IT.  
NEWBERRY

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Subject:** CURRENT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT  
**TAGS:** PGOV, BG  
**To:** NEA  
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO ISLAMABAD  
NEW DELHI  
**Type:** TE  
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